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Subject: Executive committee request regarding Saul

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From: Clancy, Kathryn <kclancy@illinois.edu>

To: Virginia Dominguez <vdomingu@illinois.edu>, rstumpf <rstumpf@illinois.edu>, Andrew Orta <aorta@illinois.edu>, Stanley H. Ambrose <ambrose@illinois.edu>, Davis, Jenny <loksi@illinois.edu>

CC: Brenda Farnell <bfarnell@illinois.edu>, Greenberg, Jessica R <jrgreenb@illinois.edu>, Laura Shackelford <llshacke@illinois.edu>

Hi all,

I am writing to Virginia as head and the members of the executive committee about a time-sensitive issue regarding Mahir Saul. I have CCed Brenda as she will become head while this issue develops, and Jessica Greenberg and Laura Shackelford as DUS and DGS, because this issue concerns the safety of our students.

I am writing to ask whether Mahir Saul is currently assigned to teach in the fall. I am aware of one Title IX investigation against him regarding perpetration towards an undergraduate from just a few years ago, and an ongoing one right now regarding perpetration towards a graduate student. Unfortunately, a conversation that I had with Heidi Johnson (head of ODEA) a few weeks ago led me to believe that this current investigation may have stalled out because the victim has withdrawn somewhat from the process (an understandable consequence of requiring justice towards perpetrators to be predicated on asking victims to be re-traumatized by a broken process).

I imagine that we were waiting and hoping for some guidance from the Title IX office to decide what to do about Saul. However, my experience of other investigations is that they tend to take many months and up to a year to complete their investigation and come up with a finding and/or sanctions. In the meantime, if we have Saul scheduled to teach students in the fall that opens us up to serious legal liability, since I and surely others perceive he has a track record of perpetration.

I would like to ask that the executive committee and other departmental administrators come together (if you haven't already) to decide on appropriate leave and/or sanctions by the department. Rather than abdicate responsibility of our students' safety to the legal system, I think we can choose to set particular standards for appropriate conduct within our department regarding student interactions, safety, mentoring, and professional behavior.

This is one case in a much broader context, and I know a number of us have started having really valuable conversations about this issue. I am actually more confident about this department going in the right direction on these issues than ever before, and more convinced than ever that we have a remarkable set of conscientious scholars in our midst. I want those broader conversations to continue, but in the meantime it hit me today that if Mahir Saul is coming back in the fall and teaching students we could be putting students at risk.

Unfortunately I am out of town Thursday and Friday for a conference (on eliminating gender-based violence, of all things) so I will be unable to talk in person about these things at our upcoming meetings. But I'd be pleased to be helpful/involved in whatever way I might.

Warmly and with appreciation,

Kate

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Kathryn B. H. Clancy, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology

Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation | Beckman Institute of Advanced Science & Technology

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

www.kateclancy.com

@KateClancy